R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 267 UD 005 778

NASHVILLE, EXPERIMENT IN URBAN SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION.

BY- EGERTON, JOHN LEESON, JIM

PUB DATE MAR 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.20 3P.

DESCRIPTORS- *METROPOLITAN AREAS, *URBAN EDUCATION, *PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS, *ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE, *ADMINISTRATOR ROLE, SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS, EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION ROLE, SCHOOL TAXES, SCHOOL FUNDS, SCHOOL INTEGRATION, FACULTY INTEGRATION, ADMINISTRATOR ATTITUDES, ADMINISTRATOR QUALIFICATIONS, ADMINISTRATOR SELECTION, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, DAVIDSON COUNTY

THE BIGGEST CHANGE WHICH RESULTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATION OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, INTO ONE GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WAS THE CREATION OF A UNIFIED SCHOOL SYSTEM. NOW, ALL BUT ONE MEMBER OF THE NEW METRO BOARD OF EDUCATION ARE NEW APPOINTEES, AS IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. UNDER THIS NEW LEADERSHIP BROAD CHANGES IN THE PREVIOUSLY "MEDIOCRE OR WORSE" EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF THE SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN INSTITUTED. AMONG THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ARE INCREASED TAX REVENUES AND SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS, GAINS IN DESEGREGATING THE SCHOOLS AND FACULTIES, CHANGES IN PURCHASING AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES, AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS IN FAVOR OF DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS. WITH STRONG BACKING FROM THE MAYOR, THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IS NOW PLANNING TO REJUVENATE THE CURRICULUM. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "PHI DELTA KAPPAN," VOLUME 48, NUMBER 7, MARCH 1967. (NH)

ED020267

Officers of Phi Delta Kappa

ARTHUR E. ARNESEN, President, 440 E. First South St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

HOMER L. JOHNSON, First Vice President, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kans. 66762.

J. W. LEE, Director, Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss. 39056.

G. B. CHILDS, Director, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr. 68508.

HOWARD SOULE, Director, 338 West Cinnabar, Phoenix, Ariz. 85021.

MAYNARD BEMIS, Executive Secretary, Eighth St. and Union Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Editorial Consultants

HAROLD G. SHANE, Chairman, University Professor of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington 47401.

JOSEPH M. CRONIN, Assistant Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

WILLIAM J. ELLENA, Associate Secretary, American Association of School Administrators, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

TED GORDON, Supervisor, Youth Services Section, Los Angeles City Schools, Los Angeles, Calif. 90054.

ROY M. HALL, Dean, School of Education, University of Delaware, Newark 19711.

ROBERT J. HAVIGHURST, Professor of Education, University of Chicago 60637.

GEORGE E. MATHES, Principal, Morey Junior High School, Denver, Colo. 80218.

PAUL STREET, Director, Bureau of School Service, University of Kentucky, Lexington 40503.

GORDON I. SWANSON, 1224 Social Science Tower, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.

Professional Staff

STANLEY M. ELAM, Editor; DONALD W. ROBINSON, Associate Editor; MARGARET McGARR, Art Director; ROBERT E. McDANIEL, Director of Administrative Services; MAURICE F. SHADLEY, Director of Special Services; WILLIAM J. GEPHART, Director of Research Services. Address staff members at Eighth St. and Union Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Photo-offset reprints of articles appearing in the PHI DELTA KAPPAN may be obtained from the Business Office. 1-2 pages $5 per 100; 3-4 $8; 5-6 $15; 7-8 $20. Minimum order 100. On larger orders, write for price schedule. Please remit with order.

UD 005 178

PHI DELTA KAPPAN

JOURNAL OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, PROFESSIONAL FRATERNITY FOR MEN IN EDUCATION

The* PHI DELTA KAPPAN *solicits and publishes articles designed to advance thinking in the fields of educational research, service, and leadership. Views expressed in an article, editorial, or review may support or oppose positions taken by Phi Delta Kappa as an organization.

In this March 1967 Issue

	Page
Editorial, The City Is the Frontier	305
Decline and Crisis in Big-City Education, *Robert E. Mason*	306
Organizing for Reform in Big-City Schools, *Daniel U. Levine*	311
The Economics of Education in Urban Society, *Charles S. Benson*	316
Big-City Education: A Cooperative Endeavor, *Robert J. Havighurst*	320
Nashville: Experiment in Urban School Consolidation, *John Egerton* and *Jim Leeson*	323
A Proposed Structure for Urban School Systems, *Philip M. Katz*	325
Urban School Systems (A Response to Mr. Katz), *Herbert A. Thelen*	327
The Education Park Concept in Pittsburgh, *S. P. Marland, Jr.*	328
Making Public Schools Accountable: A Case Study of P.S. 201 in Harlem, *Nat Hentoff*	332
The Dynamics of Self-Deception, *Elliott Shapiro*	336
The Peter Principle: We're All Incompetent, *Laurence J. Peter*	339
The Quick Response Approach in Urban Vocational Training, *Dick Turpin*	342
Two Years of Head Start, *William F. Brazziel*	345
Head Start Six Months Later, *Max Wolff and Annie Stein*	349
B.C. (Before Compensatory), *Florence Lewis*	351
Instructional Planning in Early Compensatory Education, *Carl Bereiter*	355
Intellectual Pressure Cooker—a Report on Bereiter's School	357
Boarding Schools for the Disadvantaged, *F. James Clatworthy*	360
ERIC: Data on the Disadvantaged, *Patricia Calkins* and *Joan Gussow*	362
Programs for the Disadvantaged at Hunter College, *Milton J. Gold*	365
Books for Leaders	366
Keeping Abreast in Education	373
Scraps from a Teacher's Notebook, *Don Robinson*	376

COVER PHOTO This scene was photographed last summer in a Head Start class at Toledo, Ohio. Our thanks to Richard Allen Huston, director of Head Start for the Toledo Board of Education, for the excellent photograph.—**The Editors**

VOLUME XLVIII • NUMBER 7 • Copyright 1967, by Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of August 24, 1912. • Published monthly, September through June, by Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., at The Otterbein Press, 240 W. 5th St., Dayton, Ohio 45402. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth St. and Union Ave., Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Acceptance for mailing at a special rate of postage is provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925. • Subscription rate, $5.00 per year. Single copies, while available, 60 cents each, from the Bloomington Office. Please remit with order. • Listed in *Education Index*, published by the H. W. Wilson Company, New York, N. Y. Available on microfilm through University Microfilm, Inc., Ann Arbor, Mich. • Member, Educational Press Association of America.

Address all purchase orders and address changes to the Director of Administrative Services, Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth St. and Union Ave., Bloomington, Indiana 47401. *Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to* PHI DELTA KAPPAN, *Eighth St. and Union Ave., Bloomington, Indiana 47401.*

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTE BY Phi Delta Kappa, I

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

NASHVILLE: Experiment in Urban School Consolidation

By JOHN EGERTON and JIM LEESON

ON APRIL 1, 1963, the citizens of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee, abolished their separate city and county governments and replaced them with a top-to-bottom consolidation called Metropolitan Government.

As the nation's first complete amalgamation of all branches of city and county government, Metro has become something of a model for beleaguered urban centers elsewhere in the country. Now in its fourth year, the new system already has produced noteworthy improvements in a number of areas, including law enforcement, race relations, public housing, and public health. But the biggest change of all has taken place in the schools, where two archaic and sometimes antithetical systems have ceased to exist and a unified public school system has been created.

Before Metro, the Nashville and Davidson County schools had many earmarks of run-of-the-mill school systems: inbred leadership, inconsistent quality (most of it poor), some graft and favoritism, and a lot of costly duplication. Consolidation ushered in a new school board, a single director (superintendent), and a clean slate for 82,500 pupils in the 135 schools of the city and county.

The director of the new Metro school system, John H. Harris, has said the unification effort is "like putting West Point and Annapolis together." In guiding the union movement, Harris has used the tact and the tactics of a military man, and he has often been the center of controversy. Last spring the schools became a major issue in the Metro elections, but the critics of the new system were defeated.

The conversion to a unified system began with an interim school board comprised of three citizens named in the new Metro charter and three members each from the city and county school boards. For 18 months the transitional board, headed by President Emeritus Henry H. Hill of George Peabody College, laid the groundwork for consolidated operation of the schools and screened candidates for the director's post.

In accordance with the Metro charter, the interim board also hired an outside consulting firm, Educational Research Services of White Plains, New York, to conduct a comprehensive study of the schools. The nine-month, $35,000 survey concluded that the quality of the schools was "mediocre or worse." It said classes were too large (one-fourth of all elementary grades had 35 or more pupils), salaries were too low ($4,272 for beginning teachers), the dropout rate was too high, vocational-technical programs were too limited, and buildings, books, and materials were inadequate and outdated.

When Metro Mayor Beverly Briley appointed a new school board to assume direction of the schools in July, 1964, President Hill stayed on as a consultant for the final selection of a top executive. The Metro Board of Education, a blue-ribbon slate of nine prominent citizens appointed to staggered six-year terms, included only one person who had served on the interim board (the same man was also the only carry-over from either the city or county boards). The charter gave them sole authority for operation of the schools, including selection of the director. All this was designed to "take the schools out of politics." If that utopian goal remains to be achieved, the new system seems at least to have helped take politics out of the schools.

The board interviewed 13 prospects before selecting Harris, who was then superintendent of the Des Moines, Iowa, schools. For the past three years, the 53-year-old Midwesterner has been riding shotgun on a comprehensive experiment in urban school consolidation. With the backing of his board, he has preached and practiced reform with the subtlety of a sledgehammer, and his shape-up-or-ship-out tactics have produced some grateful disciples and not a few bitter enemies. The two groups agree on only one thing: Metro schools are undergoing changes as deep as they are broad.

Harris accepted a $30,000 annual salary ($5,000 more than Mayor Briley's) and a five-year contract to come to Nashville, where he now directs a network of 141 schools serving more than 91,000 pupils. When he came, he found the schools badly short-changed, rife with personnel problems, topheavy with coaches-turned-principals, and lacking a single doctorate among their administrators. Furthermore, the purchasing system permitted some employees to line their pockets, the quality gap between rich and poor neighborhood schools was steadily widening, and 4,400 students were awaiting decisions from the new director on their applications for transfers to avoid desegregation.

UD 005 778

MR. EGERTON and MR. LEESON are on the staff of Southern Education Report, *a monthly journal published by Southern Education Reporting Service, Nashville, Tenn.*

In three years, Harris and his board have tacked up a string of impressive accomplishments:

- With the full support of Briley, the Metro council and the two highly competitive Nashville newspapers, they got voter approval of a 1 percent increase (to 4 percent) in the sales tax, with the additional funds earmarked for the schools. The new revenue amounted to $8 million the first year. Harris made 169 speeches (and lost 20 pounds) during the sales tax campaign.

- The operating budget for the schools was increased from $22.5 million in 1962-63 to $33 million in 1964-65. Including funds for capital improvements, the 1966-67 budget is about $45 million.

- Desegregation has taken a big stride forward, with more than 60 percent of the schools now biracial and 38 percent of the system's 3,850 teachers assigned to desegregated faculties. The 4,400 applications for transfer Harris faced his first year were reduced to just five in the fall of 1965.

- New directors of purchasing, food service, and transportation have been brought in, and they have, in turn, revamped the entire purchasing system, replaced 90 separate and independent cafeteria managers, and taken over the bus system from the former post-hole digger who was in charge. The new purchasing director "didn't know a soul, so he couldn't grant any favors," says Harris. On one occasion he had a large order of substandard paint returned to its supplier—a man of powerful influence among Nashville politicians. "We didn't know who we were sending it back to," Harris says, "but it wouldn't have made any difference to me." Competitive bidding is now standard practice.

- Distribution of operating funds, traditionally meted out in favor of the more affluent neighborhoods, is being shifted to benefit the most deficient schools. Harris believes a school system "is only as strong as its weakest link," and he has accepted more than $5 million in federal funds and foundation aid to help strengthen the weaker schools.

In addition to all this, Harris has been outspoken in his criticism of organized football and marching bands in junior high schools, the lack of adequate instruction in the fine arts ("not a potter's wheel or a kiln in a single school"), the absence of kindergartens, and the long neglect of libraries. He's on record in favor of homework for first graders, ability groupings, more federal aid (with some reservations), expanded vocational-technical instruction, and wholesale updating of the high school curriculum.

During 1965-66 the Metro system added 35 librarians, bought $1 million worth of new textbooks, and spent $1 million more on library books, maps, globes, and encyclopedia sets. "We were teaching with 15-year-old physics textbooks when I came here," Harris says. "That's not a textbook, that's a piece of ancient history." No less than 10 reading experiments are under way, team teaching and television are being prudently used as teaching tools, and minimum salaries for teachers have been raised to $5,000. None of the changes, taken alone, is spectacular; all of them together, when considered against conditions which existed before Metro, are impressive evidence of the far-reaching effect of Harris's new broom.

At one time or another since he came to Nashville, John Harris has been called impatient, strong-willed, practical, visionary, sensitive, blunt, tactless, realistic, arrogant, and pragmatic. Somehow, all the adjectives seem to apply. The chance to quarterback a full-fledged merger lured him to the job, and he has gone about his work with the cold efficiency of a hired gun and the fervor of an evangelist. He has encountered opposition—as when he brought in some of his administrative staff from outside—but it hasn't slowed him. "When a new football coach comes to the University of Tennessee," he says, "he's allowed to bring his whole staff with him, because they want a winner. Maybe these people [his critics] don't want a winner in education."

Mayor Briley is a strong defender of Harris, and from all indications he has left school operations and policy making strictly to the director and the Board of Education. Briley was reelected to a five-year term last May, defeating former Nashville Mayor Ben West, who made criticism of the new school system a major plank in his platform.

Harris has long been an advocate of school consolidation ("I've been preaching this for 25 years," he says). His own experience in graduate school included a year's work each in elementary education, secondary education, and business. He has a doctorate from Columbia University and worked in industry and as business manager of a large school system before becoming a superintendent. Operating a big school system is, in his view, similar to running a big business. He believes in choosing key personnel with great care and then leaving them alone to do their jobs. "If you interviewed my staff," he says, "I think there's one thing all of them would tell you: 'When he hires you, he gives you a job, and he'll only talk to you when you're having trouble.'"

The ferment in Nashville's schools began under Harris in the areas of organizational structure and management; now it is moving into the curriculum. However much the friends and foes of Metro and Harris quarrel over the man and his methods, there appears no likelihood that the new directions will be reversed. Nashville-Davidson County, with a population of about 450,000, is pioneering in the field of unified urban government, and the election last spring amounted to an endorsement of the new system—including the reconstructed schools.

"I think what is happening here will happen in dozens of other places," says Harris. "The Metro school system is going to be one of the best in the country five years from now, because people in this community are beginning to see some good schools, and they like what they see."